



## 4-H Youth Development

### 2000 Programs of Excellence

#### Assuring Quality in 4-H Programs

In 1993, more than 400 4-H staff, from practically all states and territories participated in developing a set of 14 National 4-H Criteria for Youth Development Curricula. A national juried curriculum review system was established in 1994, which now includes eleven curriculum juries, with 66 expert jurors. Several hundred youth development curricula have been reviewed against the Criteria, and 135 curricula which met all criteria have become the National Collection of 4-H Youth Development Educational Materials. Only these are recommended for use in all states, counties and territories. Usage of these extremely high quality materials is increasing rapidly.

Thirty-nine land-grant universities have now collaborated in the 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System, (4-HCCS) to use multi-state design teams in creating high quality, exciting youth development educational materials for distribution nationwide. One hundred fifty educational materials have been produced by 4HCCS to date, with more being developed each year. These exceed the quality states could produce individually. Savings realized from the high volumes produced are reinvested in the development of additional new series.

A national 4-H Impact Study is currently underway, to determine "what positive outcomes in youth result from the presence of critical elements in a 4-H experience?" This will provide the first broad, cross-program concrete nationwide baseline data on 4-H impact. A pilot study surveying 2,500 individuals was completed in the winter of 1998. A professional development/ implementation conference was conducted in the spring of 1999 for states involved in the stratified random sample national baseline data collection. Final results will be available late in 1999. Funding for the research is being provided by F4-HN/CSREES and 32 land-grant universities.

Iowa has taken the lead with a "*Targeting Life Skills*" impact measurement procedure, which surveys youth participants regarding the specific life skills each has acquired in projects and educational experiences. Youth are surveyed regarding those particular life skills each project was designed to convey. Counties submit the resulting impact data quarterly into a statewide database, along with narrative information. Several other states are replicating the effort.